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ABSTRACT

This position paper discusses the question of teacher shortage or surplus and related issues. Informal surveys were conducted by the Recruitment Leadership and Training Institute (LTI) and other major educational organizations to provide a factual basis for the study. A review of the surveys conducted by LTI and a summary of published reports are presented. A chart depicting supply and demand for beginning teachers in public schools from 1952 to 1971 and projected to 1980 is included. Following the presentation of factual data, new ways of looking at supply and demand and recommendations are suggested. Recommendations concern preservice screening and training, inservice training and evaluation, and personal administration. A postscript indicating the availability of figures and a bibliography are included. (MJM)

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Teacher Shortage or Surplus: That is the Question

A Position Paper
prepared by the
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and Training Institute
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Design by Harold Pattek

Introduction

A major task of the Recruitment LTI (Leadership and Training Institute), throughout the two years of its existence, has been the consideration of the problems relating to the recruitment of educational personnel during a period of transition from shortage to over-supply. The Education Professions Development Act was passed in June 1967 at the height of national concern about what the Act terms the "critical shortage" of teachers. Since then, however, the situation has changed rather drastically: many graduates of teacher training institutions are having difficulty obtaining positions, and young people are being advised to consider careers in fields other than education. The LTI was aware, however, that the figures and the generalizations might obscure and distract attention from a number of important questions concerning both quantity and quality.

Quantity:

Given the fact that there may indeed be an oversupply of teachers on a general basis, what about specific specialties, such as early childhood education, special education, or education for careers? Are these fields still suffering from a shortage, and, if so, what are the implications for teacher training and retraining? How have innovations in classroom techniques and equipment – team-teaching, the utilization of paraprofessionals, computer-assisted instruction, informal classrooms – affected or been affected by the teacher supply and demand ratio? What effect have the critical financial problems of many (particularly urban) school systems had

on their hiring practices? Finally, why was the current teacher surplus not foreseen, and what can be done in the future to prevent significant imbalances between the supply of teachers and the demand for their services?

Quality:

What kinds of people are now staffing the schools, and what kinds are being recruited to the field of education, particularly through such Federal efforts as the EPDA training programs? What is the racial composition of school staffs? What is the ratio of men to women at various levels of educational responsibility? Are most teachers and administrators the products of similar backgrounds, training and experience, or are there a variety of avenues into the education professions? Has EPDA proved effective in attracting many different kinds of people to service in the public schools? Do the current systems of training and certification actually succeed in screening out potentially able educational personnel?

These and many other important issues have been examined and discussed by the Recruitment LTI. In order to provide a factual basis for its study and for the development of recommendations to the Office of Education, the LTI made several informal surveys and reviewed the results of others, conducted by such major organizations as the National Education Association. The results of these efforts are reported here. As will be evident, this report does not pretend to provide a

comprehensive analysis of the issues raised above, nor to offer solutions to the current recruitment problems. But it does suggest that determining whether the United States has a teacher shortage or surplus is too complex – and too important – a question to be answered by an adding machine.

Surveys Conducted by the LTI

The Recruitment Leadership and Training Institute is one of a number of national advisory groups assembled by the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development to provide advice and technical assistance both to the Bureau and to specific field projects which it funds. This LTI, constituted under Section 504 of the Education Professions Development Act ("Attracting Qualified Persons to the Field of Education"), was asked to look beyond Section 504 projects and consider recruitment practices and problems in other BEPD projects and in education at large. Recognizing the very broad nature of its assignment, the LTI attempted to gather pertinent information from several informal sample surveys. Although there were various indications that the Bureau itself might engage in a comprehensive data-gathering and analysis effort, such an effort has not yet taken place. The findings of the LTI, therefore, while admittedly far from complete, may be of considerable interest if only because they underline the need for compiling accurate information. Intelligent decisions – or even guesses – must be extremely difficult in the absence of or with grave inconsistencies in data from the field.

Spring 1971

During the Spring of 1971, two members of the LTI panel attempted to compile information on vocational education training programs funded under EPDA. Their purpose was to determine whether special efforts were being made to recruit diversified individuals for participation in training programs

funded under Parts B and F of EPDA.

During the course of the survey, it was discovered that while certain information was probably available within USOE, there was no staff or time to compile it. Secondly, certain information which could have been useful in describing program participants (such as their ages) was not available. Thirdly, information was not exchanged between offices in the field responsible for the individual projects; there was apparently no attempt to have USOE serve as a clearinghouse for an exchange of information. And, finally, there was a lack of uniformity in the types of information collected and/or maintained. Perhaps most disturbing was the discovery that because of its limited staff, USOE was unable to see that its own guidelines were followed by institutions of higher education, or by state and local education agencies.

Fall 1971

In the fall of 1971, a one-page questionnaire was sent to 50 school districts (25 in cities of over 200,000 population; 25 in towns with a population of under 35,000, distributed throughout the nation). Of the 18 urban and 18 rural (small town) school districts responding, 24 districts reported no shortage of teachers. Where vacancies existed, they most often were in the areas of industrial arts, vocational and special education. While school enrollment had dropped in 14 of the urban school districts, it had increased in more than half of the small town school systems. Some general conclusions based on this

survey were:

- –Total enrollment is down in urban school systems where there are more minority group students than white students.
- –In small town school systems, total student enrollment has increased. Minority group representation on both teacher and student levels is minimal.
- –Minority group personnel is employed in greater numbers (in both absolute and relative terms) in school systems where there are large numbers of minority group students.
- –School systems hiring large numbers of minority group personnel tend to be in the southern and eastern states.
- –Although shortages exist mainly in urban schools, areas of shortage tend to be the same in all school districts – chiefly, industrial arts, vocational and special education.

Spring 1972

In order to gain a more precise picture of shortage and surplus in various types of school school systems, the LTI prepared a detailed questionnaire, asking for such information as racial and sex composition of educational staffs at all levels.

The questionnaire also included a number of general questions on, e.g., the impact of budget problems on hiring practices. Only nine of the 15 districts queried replied: four of these were in towns of under 30,000 population; two, between 50 and 100,000; and three over 100,000 population. Four of these districts reported that minority group students comprised more than half of the stu-

dent population. The small sample size and the different systems used in reporting data made it all but impossible to draw any general conclusions from this survey, but some of the points noted may, however, be of interest.

- –All but three of the respondents indicated a substantial decrease in student enrollment over the past several years. Whether this is associated with a continuing exodus from urban to suburban areas is subject for further exploration.
- –All districts reported using a sizeable number of classroom aides, specialists and other supportive staff. These ranged from 10% to 30% of the total staff.
- –Three of the nine districts indicated the use of teaching personnel with temporary certification.
- –Despite financial problems, no system anticipated having to drop current employees, with the possible exception of long-term substitutes. However, supportive personnel positions (art and music, e.g.) which become vacant through normal attrition may remain unfilled.
- –If funds were available, school districts would hire teachers and support staff for the following categories: (1) learning disabilities, (2) reading, (3) math and science, and (4) industrial arts.
- –With the exception of these categories, many districts have more qualified applicants than positions open.

Summary of Published Reports

In its investigation of the problem of teacher supply and demand, the LTI reviewed three recent publications which describe this problem. Included in the review were: *Education Staffing Patterns Update, 1972,* published by the National Center for Information on Careers in Education; *Teacher Supply and Demand in the Public Schools, 1971,* issued by the National Education Association; and the report, *Too Many Teachers: Fact or Fiction?,* published in 1972 by Phi Delta Kappa. The following pages contain a summary of their findings.

In 1971, the supply of public school teachers surpassed the record level reported in 1970. The number of graduates in 1970 was 292,634; in 1971 it jumped to 305,711. The number of graduates is projected to total 312,000 in 1972 and, if production continues to increase at the present rate, it will total 412,000 by 1979.

At the same time, the demand for teachers to handle increased enrollments is at the lowest point in recent history. In the fall of 1971, enrollment growth required the addition of approximately 19,000 teaching positions in public elementary and secondary schools. It is estimated that enrollment growth will require the addition of only 8,000 new positions in the fall of 1972 and *no* new positions in 1974. A reduction of 1,000 teachers is projected for 1975. A projected gradual increase of 1,000 added positions after 1975 is insignificant in comparison

with the more than two million public school teachers currently employed.

In 1971, the new supply of beginning elementary school teachers was approximately 56,000 greater than the number of positions filled from this source. In secondary schools, the total 1971 new supply exceeded the total number employed by approximately 47,000.

In a survey of the nation's 83 largest school systems included in the NEA report, 66 systems reported a total of 1,420 unfilled positions in July 1971. The unfilled positions represented 0.4 percent of the teachers in those systems. This figure of 0.4 percent has declined each year since 1967, when the corresponding figure was 2.4 percent.

On the following page is a chart depicting the supply and demand for beginning teachers in public schools from 1952 to 1971 and projected to 1980.

Even though there is a substantial oversupply of teachers nationwide, shortages in specific fields still remain. The acute shortage fields in many states remain essentially the same as they have been in recent years – early childhood, industrial arts and special education. Career education, as reflected by the acute shortage of vocational-technical instructors, is growing as more agencies and school systems become aware of this national priority in education. Additionally, reports reflect an increasing sensitivity to the total

2–SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM 1952 TO 1971 AND PROJECTED TO 1980

Fall of year	Elementary school (000's)			Secondary school (000's)			Total (000's)		
	Supply	Demand	Difference	Supply	Demand	Difference	Supply	Demand	Difference
1952	31.4	49.4	18.0	42.6	35.2	7.4	74.0	84.6	10.6
1953	31.2	50.3	19.1	37.4	36.1	1.3	68.6	86.4	17.8
1954	30.7	65.2	34.5	33.8	23.0	10.8	64.5	88.2	23.7
1955	31.4	75.9	44.5	34.4	52.1	17.7	65.8	128.0	62.2
1956	34.0	53.9	19.9	39.3	61.8	22.5	73.3	115.7	42.4
1957	36.7	71.8	35.1	45.0	51.0	6.0	81.7	122.8	41.1
1958	37.8	67.5	29.7	47.8	44.5	3.3	85.6	112.0	26.4
1959	39.8	56.9	17.1	49.5	60.5	11.0	89.3	117.4	28.1
1960	43.8	66.8	23.0	53.7	55.3	1.6	97.5	122.1	24.6
1961	43.2	53.0	9.8	53.5	72.8	19.3	96.7	125.8	29.1
1962	48.2	59.6	11.4	58.5	62.2	3.7	106.7	121.8	15.1
1963	51.6	65.4	13.8	66.7	82.8	16.1	118.3	148.2	29.9
1964	60.5	78.5	18.0	70.3	77.5	7.2	130.8	156.0	25.2
1965	64.8	71.1	6.3	77.8	77.6	0.2	142.6	148.7	6.1
1966	64.7	88.3	23.6	84.6	78.8	5.8	149.3	167.1	17.8
1967	63.8	83.3	19.5	88.1	75.8	12.3	151.9	159.1	7.2
1968	76.1	87.0	10.9	99.4	90.6	8.8	175.5	177.6	2.1
1969	86.3	84.7	1.6	112.5	94.2	18.3	198.8	178.9	19.9
1970	91.5	61.3	30.2	126.5	79.7	46.8	218.0	141.0	77.0
1971	103.4	46.9	56.5	125.7	78.4	47.3	229.1	125.3	103.8
1972	104.1	37.0	67.1	130.0	78.9	51.1	234.1	115.9	118.2
1973	108.6	32.2	76.4	135.7	83.3	52.4	244.3	115.5	128.8
1974	113.1	33.2	79.9	141.2	75.8	65.4	254.3	109.0	145.3
1975	118.2	38.3	79.9	147.7	69.9	77.8	265.9	108.2	157.7
1976	123.0	44.6	78.4	153.7	65.6	88.1	276.7	110.2	166.5
1977	128.0	54.3	73.7	159.9	57.0	102.9	287.9	111.3	176.6
1978	132.4	61.5	70.9	165.4	51.9	113.5	297.8	113.4	184.4
1979	137.1	74.1	63.0	171.2	38.5	132.7	308.3	112.6	195.7
1980	139.7	...	...	174.5	...	...	314.2	...	...

NEA Research Bulletin, October, 1971, p. 71. Used with the permission of the NEA Research Division.

development of the student in the growing emergence of school psychologists, psychometrists, elementary counselors, bilingual instructors and remedial reading specialists positions.

The NEA and NCICE surveys reported either a low supply or an extremely low supply of qualified teacher applicants in the following assignments:

NCICE SURVEY	NEA SURVEY
Vocational education (31 states)	Special Education (33 states)
Early childhood education (28 states)	Industrial Arts (27 states)
Industrial arts (28 states)	Remedial reading and speech correction (27 states)
Mathematics (21 states)	Assignments related to disadvantaged children (25 states)
Special education (20 states)	Elementary school librarians (23 states)
Elementary reading (19 states)	Mathematics (15 states)
Secondary reading (18 states)	
Bilingual education (18 states)	
Elementary counselors (18 states)	

(Discrepancies exist between the two surveys because the NCICE survey was made one year later than the NEA survey and because survey methods differed.)

The NEA survey reported that the following assignments most frequently have an oversupply of qualified applicants:
Social studies
(43 states)
English language arts
(35 states)
Men teachers of health
and physical education
(28 states)
Elementary school teachers
(24 states)
Business education
(16 states)
Home economics
(14 states)
Foreign languages
(14 states)
Art
(13 states)

It is interesting to note that none of these three national surveys provide any information on the need to recruit members of minority groups to positions of responsibility in the schools. Neither is information provided on the ratios of men to women at various levels of responsibility in school systems.

The NCICE survey reported the following major trends:
–The growth of reading development programs at all levels: nineteen states indicated a need for more elementary reading instructors. Shortages also exist in 18 states for secondary reading specialists.

–A new sensitivity to all interest groups as evidenced by the requests for bilingual instructors (18 states), environmental teachers (11 states), and ethnic studies instructors (6 states).

–A continuing deficit in the number of male elementary teachers. Of the 13 states registering a scarcity of upper elementary instructors, all but one state specified male instructors only.

–The continuing growth in the field of early childhood education. Twenty-eight states recorded an increasing need for preschool, kindergarten, and early childhood education personnel.

–An increasing demand for industrial arts and vocational-technical personnel. Twenty-eight states registered a growth trend in industrial arts teachers while 31 states indicated a need for more vocational-technical personnel.

–A shortage of qualified personnel in special education. Twenty states have specified a demand for more trained individuals in this understaffed area. It should be understood that some states include secondary reading teachers in the special education category and there was a need in 18 states for such individuals.

–Development in the area of instructional support. State officials indicated an emerging growth pattern in librarians (17) and technicians such as media specialists (9).

–Growing pupil personnel services in the schools. Eighteen states indicate increasing development in elementary counseling. Twelve states listed secondary counseling as an area of potential staff growth. Positions

such as school psychologist (13 states), psychometrist (6 states), and social worker (8 states) are also developing.

–An ongoing oversupply of social studies and language arts instructors in the education marketplace. One state registered a need for such personnel.

All of the figures and trends reported up to this point in the summary reflect the needs of the schools as they exist today. It is generally accepted that the surplus of teachers would be drastically reduced if enough money were available to permit school systems to meet more adequately the needs of children. The NEA has established minimum standards of quality in educational staffing. These minimum standards call for beginning teachers to:

–Replace teachers having substandard qualifications, reduce maximum class size to 24 in elementary schools and maximum teaching load to 124 in secondary schools.
–Enlarge offerings of kindergarten and nursery schools to include the same proportion of pre-school-age children as are now enrolled in the primary grades.
–Enlarge offerings which have been curtailed because of teacher shortages.
–Reduce the impact of teachers misassigned.
–Enlarge the coverage of special education programs to students needing these services.
–Fill positions created by normal turnover and enrollment change.
–Enlarge the scope of school offerings.

–Provide resource personnel and supportive professional services.

If these standards were met, much greater numbers of teachers would be needed. They would have required the employment of 729,000 beginning teachers in the fall of 1971 instead of the 125,300 actually employed. However, because of the shortage of funds, schools failed to staff adequately to meet increased enrollments, to replace teachers due to turnover, to replace those with substandard qualifications, to reduce overcrowded classes and to provide the instructional services suggested to meet the desired level termed "quality" by the NEA.

Until federal and state monies are allocated to schools in sufficient amounts to provide the quality conditions set forth by the NEA, the overall yearly increase in demand for teachers will be approximately 8 percent of the total number of teachers, or about 170,000. There is little doubt that the quality of education should be improved and that new teachers should be hired. However, the record of the past two or three years shows that schools are reducing staffs rather than adding to them. The Phi Delta Kappa report concludes with a succinct summary of the situation documented in all three studies: "Given enough money, the conclusion may be that 'too many teachers' is fiction, but until the money problem is solved, it is fact."

New Ways of Looking at Supply and Demand in Education

The traditional model for analyzing recruitment needs assumes that school systems will continue to recruit teachers from higher education institutions for schools very similar to those operating today. It assumes (1) that staffing patterns will remain the same – that there will continue to be 35 or so students per classroom teacher, for example; (2) that the tenure system will remain virtually unchanged; (3) that the present structure of the schools – with a largely white, middle-class base – will remain the same, and (4) that their financial base will remain stable. Viewed in this light, the existence of an over-supply of teachers is indisputable. A number of other models for analyzing over-supply and shortage have been suggested, however, all of which prompt those concerned about education to probe beyond the apparently obvious.

The Quality Criterion Model (NEA)

The immediate achievement of minimum standards of quality education would require a larger supply of beginning teachers than the number of 1971 graduates of the higher education institutions training programs. These standards of minimum quality would require that new teachers be hired to:

- Teach the added numbers of pupils normally expected.
- Replace teachers normally terminating or interrupting their careers.
- Replace teachers who have not completed at least a bachelor's degree.
- Reduce class size or teacher loads.
- Undertake newly available comprehensive

educational programs and services.

Career Education Model

The new emphasis now being placed on vocational, technical, and career-oriented educational programs implies that supply and demand may not be easy to determine.

- How will "teacher" be defined, and who will qualify?
- How will "counselor" and other staff be defined? What about their roles? How non-traditional might their work, setting, hours and style become?
- How are school systems to deal with the skilled personnel not holding degrees, blue collar individuals, low income group members? What will the provisions be to prevent their exclusion as "teachers," under the new definitions, and/or to assure their advancement on the career ladder?

Teacher Support Staff Training Model

A set of criteria for the increased use of aides and paraprofessionals – particularly in the classroom setting – still needs to be developed. Although they cost a good deal less to train and hire, yet they often hold a position of responsibility comparable with that of the teacher. The "man in the street" can be and has been trained successfully as a teacher in, e.g., the Career Opportunities Program. Similarly, in Head Start Programs, parents have been utilized in classrooms.

Any decision to increase the ratio of teachers to students, changing program priorities (such as placing a new emphasis on reading), or a decision to open "experimental" schools

on a broad scale would all be important factors in changing the balance of supply and demand. While it may be argued that none of these developments is likely in view of financial pressure felt by most school systems, it would seem premature for educators to tie their recruitment plans and projections too closely to a traditional model which may, sooner or later, no longer approximate the actual school program.

Recommendations

In the course of its study and discussion of recruitment problems, the Recruitment Leadership and Training Institute has concluded that labels such as "shortage" or "surplus" may be extremely misleading. Even if the data and projections on teacher supply and demand were entirely reliable (an assumption not warranted by the experience of the LTI and others), mere quantitative analysis of the figures tends to oversimplify and distract attention from some important issues which require examination and resolution. These issues are not new, but they become more insistent in a time when many are beguiled into thinking that the teacher shortage has finally been solved. They are complex, and many are encrusted with the weight of tradition and usage, but, in the judgment of this LTI, they cannot be ignored or pushed aside while plans for recruiting future teachers are being made. The LTI, therefore, recommends that the U.S. Office of Education, and other responsible and concerned educators, give serious consideration to the following questions:

Pre-service Screening and Training

1. Can more effective measures be devised and used to assess the potential of prospective teachers? For instance, might there not be a practice teaching period during the freshman or sophomore years during which teaching aptitude and ability might be tested?
2. How can relationships between school districts and teacher training institutions be improved in order to maintain a good supply/demand balance and to assure that future teachers are being trained to meet the particular needs of

	local schools (especially those in urban areas)? 3. Can procedures be developed to predict performance of teacher applicants, particularly for districts which have more "qualified" applicants than positions open? 4. Can certification requirements be based in part on proven performance rather than accumulation of academic credits?
In-service Training and Evaluation	1. Can principals and other supervisors be provided with better methods to evaluate teacher performance, in order to assure that each member of the educational staff is assigned to a position compatible with his interest and skill? 2. Can tenure be re-evaluated – the concept itself, as well as the requirements for obtaining and losing it? 3. Can programs to retrain experienced teachers for specific areas of shortage be improved and expanded?
Personnel Administration	1. Can more males be recruited to elementary teaching? More females promoted to high-level administrative positions? 2. Should the teaching and administrative staff not reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the student population? 3. How can the concept of differentiated staffing be improved and built into the day-to-day operation of schools? 4. Can Federal funding of school programs be improved? There are indications that categorical grants impede sound educational planning: they restrict funds to areas which may not be those of most critical need within a given district; they frequently disrupt programs by be-

ginning after the start of a school year; and they are responsible for establishing programs which cannot be continued beyond the grant period, no matter how successful or necessary such programs may be.

An oversupply of teachers, where a shortage so recently existed, presents educational administrators with an exciting and important challenge: the opportunity to define their personnel needs and to match people to jobs in far more efficient and creative ways than has usually been done.

A larger supply of teachers also makes it possible to consider a number of options which a shortage formerly closed: reduction of class size; extension of early childhood education; expansion of services to all children, particularly the handicapped and the gifted. Clearly, these options cannot be picked up until and unless the school financial crisis eases. Conversely, funds for education may continue to be in short supply as long as the general public is led to believe that schools are fully staffed and that trained teachers are going begging. The Recruitment Leadership Training Institute believes that it is time to define educational personnel needs according to criteria of quality rather than quantity.

Postscript: The Figures are Hard to Find

The Recruitment LTI recognizes that many other efforts, both more intensive and more extensive, have been made to gather information on school personnel, practices and policies. Its own limited attempts to collect and collate current data proved valuable, however, not only in illuminating its discussion of recruitment needs, but in substantiating the very grave difficulties which confront educational researchers and policy-makers. The experience of this LTI coincides all too exactly with that of other investigators: reliable comparative data on many school matters do not exist. The frustration has been clearly stated in many published reports. For instance, the Syracuse University scholars who prepared a report on Federal aid to education for the Mondale Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, declared:

> At present, there is a deplorable paucity of useful information available to anyone – public official, researcher, educator or interested citizen . . . Despite rigorous efforts and substantial resources, we experienced enormous difficulty collecting and comparing data . . . In our survey differences in reporting posed constant problems. There are neither uniform definitions nor common sources of educational information.[1]

Similarly, the National Education Association, in the report of its 1970 survey of teaching pos-

1. Berke, Bailey, Campbell and Sacks, *Federal Aid to Public Education: Who Benefits?* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1971).

itions, noted:

> Owing to the lack of precise data, it is difficult to establish the specific effects of new conditions influencing some of the components of teacher demand . . . The limitations in the availability of data . . . require that the results be interpreted with caution.[2]

At all three levels – local, state and Federal – educational statistics are scattered among various offices and agencies. Simply finding out what figures are available and where, who maintains them and permits their release, constitutes a task of major proportions. Having gained access to the records (itself no mean feat, for permission is often granted only with reluctance), the researcher immediately encounters dismaying problems of inconsistency, inaccuracy and incompleteness in data compilation.

Any serious debate on such questions as supply and demand in the education profession must remain at the theoretical level in the absence of accurate and up-to-date information from the field. Predictions of future needs and planning for new programs are hardly possible – and indeed may be counter-productive – unless they are firmly based on a knowledge of what is happening in the real world of teachers, schools and children. Indeed, it is safe to say that the absence of such data had much to do

2. NEA Research Decision, *Teacher Supply and Demand in Public Schools, 1970* (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1970).

with the failure to predict the present "oversupply." No matter how admirable the explicit goals of the U.S. Office of Education or of specific school systems (e.g., a commitment to redressing the imbalance of minority group members in administrative positions), the lack of easily obtainable and well-documented facts may implicitly refute the goals or make it impossible for them to be attained. For instance, following passage of the Education Professions Development Act, USOE established many programs intended to attract and train a wide variety of people for service in the schools. But there is no way of telling whether or not these programs have proved successful without specific figures on, e.g., the number of minority group members trained and employed.

The Recruitment LTI, therefore, strongly urges the U.S. Office of Education to take the lead in the development of a comprehensive data-gathering model for use by local school districts. Such a model should take into account not only the general information (on students and staff, programs, revenues, etc.) needed for regular educational assessment and planning, but the specialized information needs occasioned by categorical grants, experimental programs, and so on. Having established the groundwork for a comprehensive data-gathering system, USOE would then be able to systematize its reporting requirements and avoid the duplication of requests for information which understandably irritates school administrators. USOE should also undertake to organize educational data – its own and per-

tinent data gathered by other governmental agencies – and have them readily available for use by researchers and planners.

Statistics alone cannot correct current problems or predict future trends, but they are an essential tool in mapping educational strategy. By illuminating the present, they help to clarify the alternatives for the days ahead.

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